

*Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park  
Park Advisory Commission Meeting*

March 19, 2009

Warren County Government Center  
Front Royal, Virginia

- I) Introductions
- II) Review of Minutes from December 18, 2008
- III) Park Staff—Jacox
- IV) General Management Plan—Stubbs
  - A) Planning status update
  - B) Briefing on GMP public meetings
  - C) Review of GMP public comments (handout)
- V) Old Business
- VI) New Business
- VII) Next Meeting—June 18, Strasburg

Meeting Notes

Commission members in attendance: Diann Jacox, Designated Federal Official (DFO); Fred Andrae, Mary Bowser, Patrick Farris, Randy Jones, Elizabeth McClung, Pam Sheets, Kris Tierney, Chair.

Commission members absent: Gene Dicks, Roy Downey, Sarah Mauck, Gary Rinkerman, Jim Smalls, Dan Sticklely

Others in attendance: Bob Grogg, NPS volunteer, Linwood Outlaw, III, *Northern Virginia Daily*, Chris Stubbs, NPS.

Chair Kris Tierney opened the meeting.

Diann Jacox spoke about Chris Stubbs's departure. She plans to advertise the position early in April in hopes that the person will be here before Chris's departure. She has decided not to replace Chris with another community planner position since the GMP issues are now winding down. She may consider a historical landscape architect position. The position will enable the park to manage the landscape and provide some technical assistance to the key partners as well as have some planning expertise. She has also

gotten funding for an interpretive specialist, who can help integrate the park's stories and provide some assistance in branding—dealing with six separate logos. The position can help the park develop a public profile. Jacox is hopeful that funding for additional positions will become available in future fiscal years.

Kris Tierney, on behalf of the board, spoke about the importance of Chris's contribution to the GMP process.

Chris Stubbs spoke about this quarter being a watershed in the GMP process. The public comment period has closed. The counties and towns all presented unanimous resolutions in favor of the GMP. Three public meetings were held—in Front Royal, Strasburg, and Middletown. Several themes emerged from the meetings, the key one being that private landowners are still vague about what it means to be within a national park. There also seemed to be a fair amount of concern about the partnerships and the long-term viability of the park.

The commissioners agreed that the success of the park depends on the success of the partnerships. This is a relationship that must maximize the strengths and work on the weaknesses. There was agreement that it would take work and effort to educate the public on what exactly this park is.

Some interest came from horse groups wanting trails and access to them. At this moment very little of the park is contiguous, so there are not even trails to provide access. But on the larger front the NPS is about preservation and protection. Other land use agencies allow for multi-use activities. This stance could change in the future, but the investment needed to provide for horse trails is great: large trailheads to accommodate trailer parking, long trails needed to provide interesting rides, and pedestrian and horse use are not necessarily compatible. For this and other concerns the NPS needs to respond to all the issues raised and document decisions. The priority now and in the immediate future is to create infrastructure and build programs. Nothing should be ruled out today for future consideration, but everyone should recognize that for now many priorities are at hand, and only the most pressing—those concerning the long range health of the park—can be dealt with.

The commissioners reviewed written comments that had been received by the NPS. Some general observations that came forth during the review of the comments were:

- Good support for alternative D; no one asked for a different alternative
- The language about what is a visitor center and what is a visitor contact station needs work. All must remember that visitors are unaware of the subtleties, and it is the responsibility of the partners to make this a seamless operation.
- The commissioners were discouraged that after so much discussion there are still misunderstandings about the nature of the partnerships and the partners' relationship to the NPS.

- Several commissioners reminded the group that they must keep their eyes on where the park will be five or ten years from now. Doing so will help some issues that today appear large today, return to life-size in the future.
- The NPS is committed to stable, productive relationships with every partner.
- Management zones have sparked more discussion than any other issue. They may be the most misunderstood concept. Nevertheless education and clarification remain important for explaining this tenet of park management.
- The GMP is a plan; it is not land use regulations. To think of the plan in such terms is a fundamental misunderstanding.
- The concept of the plan is collaborative, not coercive

The minutes were approved as written.

### New Business

Diann distributed a letter from acting director Dan Wenk about the forthcoming Ken Burns PBS documentary: *The National Park: America's Best Idea*. The six-part, twelve-hour program will air in the fall of 2009.

Kris Tierney adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

The next meeting is at the Strasburg town hall, June 18, 2009.

### Handouts

1. Agenda
2. List of GMP Meetings
3. December 18, 2008, Meeting Notes
4. Summary of Comments from Organizations
5. Letter from acting NPS Director Dan Wenk